



UK National Nuclear Laboratory

Candidate Brief: Non-Executive Director – Projects and Programmes

Presented by:

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The Commissioner for
Public Appointments

Welcome

Non-Executive Director – Project and Programmes

Dear Candidate,

I would like to thank you for your interest in joining the Board of United Kingdom National Nuclear Laboratory (UKNNL) as our Non-Executive Director – Projects and Programmes (NED).

The UK's 'nuclear revival' is moving at pace and is critical in the national mission to secure energy security, net-zero goals, and national resilience.

UKNNL is the government's lead civil laboratory for nuclear fission, providing the science, technology and world-leading laboratories to support the country's civil nuclear programmes, to support growth of the UK nuclear sector and ensure they are delivered safely and cost-effectively. We are pivotal in innovation on advanced nuclear fuels, waste reduction, recycling and SMRs. Our societal impact goes well beyond energy and includes medical isotopes for healthcare, national security capabilities and industrial and scientific advancement.

This is a very exciting time to join the UKNNL Board as a NED and provide strategic leadership and risk oversight in one of the most technically complex and tightly regulated sectors.

The newly created NED – Projects and Programmes will strengthen Board-level oversight of delivery across UKNNL's most strategically important and complex infrastructure investment programmes.

This role will provide the opportunity to influence an organisation of national importance and purpose and strategic influence at the science-policy interface.

We are looking for an exceptional individual who has gained significant experience running relevant infrastructure programmes or major projects / and programmes (in the Nuclear, defence, or similarly regulated industry). You will be inquisitive, tenacious and provide freshness and new thinking to the Board of an organisation undertaking a period of change. Strong communication, integrity, capability to manage complex stakeholder relationships within a senior leadership context, including the ability to mentor senior executives as appropriate will be critical.

If you are excited by the opportunity to apply your experience to a high-impact, purpose-driven organisation that directly shapes national outcomes, I look forward to receiving your application.

David Scott
Interim Chair
United Kingdom National Nuclear Laboratory
May 2026



About UKNNL

UKNNL is the UK's lead civil national laboratory for nuclear fission, delivering nuclear science to benefit society.

Purpose

Today, nuclear energy is part of the solution to the deep challenges of energy independence, national security and net zero. Government owned but operationally independent, UKNNL are here to help solve some of these challenges and, in doing so, deliver on the long-held purpose of nuclear science to benefit society.

Whether it's keeping the lights on or keeping the UK's submarines at sea, as demand for nuclear has grown, so too has the demand for UKNNL's combination of niche and highly-specialist skills and facilities. Rather than replicating what partners, suppliers and colleagues across the sector already do, they focus on work that can only be done by a sovereign national laboratory.

What UKNNL does

We drive innovation in nuclear science, ensuring the UK has the capabilities it needs – whether in physical infrastructure, or in the skills and knowledge of sector workforce – to create and deploy the technologies of the future.

Working in partnership with universities, UKNNL champions the best new ideas and concepts, nurturing upcoming scientists and researchers. And alongside partners in industry, we help keep existing nuclear reactors running successfully, support a strong and effective UK supply chain and ensure new technologies have a chance to become commercially viable.

To achieve our mission we will:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a custodian of national capabilities and infrastructure critical for national and energy security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver practical nuclear research and enable decommissioning programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become government's lead civil technical and strategic advisor for nuclear fuels and nuclear materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide expertise and facilities to be a platform for the private sector to accelerate the deployment of technology to market
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out research to continue securing the safe operation of nuclear plants domestically and internationally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion and nurture advanced nuclear skills



Areas of technical expertise:

FUELS, REACTORS AND REPROCESSING

Developing and studying nuclear fuels, from creation to recycling and reprocessing.

Rolls-Royce | Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

WASTE MANAGEMENT & DECOMMISSIONING

Conducting leading research and operational support for treating all levels of nuclear waste, including decontamination and disposal solutions.

Nuclear Waste Services | NDA

NUCLEAR OPERATIONS

Delivering technical expertise and safety solutions to keep UK nuclear facilities running securely through modelling, robotic plant intervention and analysis.

Sellafield Ltd | Ministry of Defence

Delivering programmes of national importance

DEFENCE

Supporting the Royal Navy to protect our nation

Ministry of Defence

Helping the UK to keep the country safe

GENERATION

Working with EDF in helping the UK on its journey to net zero

EDF

Helping to power prosperity across the UK

DECOMMISSIONING

Collaborating with the NDA Group to clean up the UK's earliest nuclear sites and manage nuclear waste

NDA

Helping to deliver the clean power mission

GOVERNMENT AND NEW BUILD

Enabling the future by supporting new nuclear capacity in the UK

Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

Helping the UK become a clean energy superpower

Our Values:

<p>Safety in everything we do</p>	<p>Customer Delivering value, sharing success</p>
<p>Integrity Doing the right things right</p>	<p>Taking responsibility Solving the problem, owning the solution</p>
<p>Enthusiasm Enjoying what we do, inspiring others</p>	<p>Collaboration Being inclusive, unleashing potential</p>



Additional information

[United Kingdom National Nuclear Laboratory](#)

[News - United Kingdom National Nuclear Laboratory](#)

[Values and Behaviours - United Kingdom National Nuclear Laboratory](#)

[The Board - United Kingdom National Nuclear Laboratory](#)

[Executive Team - United Kingdom National Nuclear Laboratory](#)



Role Description

Context

UKNNL operates large scale, national nuclear research and laboratory infrastructure required to support programmes vital to national security, energy security/net zero and legacy clean up. It is a technical service organisation with an ongoing requirement to deliver significant infrastructure programmes to continually refurbish and renew its research infrastructure. These programmes often entail delivery of significant CAPEX projects in radiologically challenging environments that are simultaneously delivering critical national programmes that cannot be interrupted.

Overview

UKNNL is seeking a Non-Executive Director with significant experience running relevant infrastructure programmes or major projects / and programmes (in the Nuclear, defence or similarly regulated industry). This is to strengthen Board-level oversight of delivery across the Lab's most strategically important and complex programmes, principally the aforementioned infrastructure investment programmes.

The role will also support the Board's enhanced focus on delivery management more generally, promoting the extension of best practice in a proportionate and appropriate manner across UKNNL's technical delivery. It will provide, expert challenge, assurance and insight on whether UKNNL's projects are being delivered safely, on time, to cost and to the required quality standards. *This will potentially include chairing a Projects committee.*

Key Activities

Major projects and portfolio oversight

- Provide Board level scrutiny and challenge across UKNNL's, infrastructure programmes portfolio, including schedule, cost, scope, risk and delivery confidence.
- Promote application of professional and proportionate delivery management practice across UKNNL's operations and technical delivery portfolio
- Support the Board in maintaining a clear view of which projects are on track, at risk or distressed.
- Support the Board in maintaining a clear view of operations. If required by the Board, chair a Nuclear Projects & Programmes Committee, setting its agenda and ensuring it operates effectively and in accordance with its Terms of Reference and ensuring strong coordination with other Board committees where issues cut across risk, performance, delivery and culture.

Delivery assurance and decision-making

- Contribute to Board and committee level consideration of major project business cases and key lifecycle decision points, testing realism, affordability and deliverability.
- Challenge and assess the credibility of recovery plans where projects are underperforming.



Safety, regulatory and commercial awareness

- Bring an informed perspective on the integration of safety, security, regulatory and environmental considerations into project delivery.
- Support effective oversight of commercial strategy, contract performance and supply-chain risk for major projects.

Capability and learning

- Provide insight on whether UKNNL has the project leadership, controls and capability required to deliver its portfolio.
- Encourage systematic learning from completed and in-flight projects to improve delivery performance over time.

Wider Board contribution

- Contribute fully as a Non-Executive- Director working closely with the Chair, CEO and fellow Non-Executive Directors to provide constructive challenge, insight and support across the Board's wider agenda.
- Support the development of future strategy as the UK's national lab for Nuclear.

Nature of the role

This is an active, engaged non-executive role. The successful candidate will be expected to:

- Provide timely advice and challenge between formal meetings when required
- Be well sighted on UKNNL's strategy, leadership challenges and programme issues
- Build effective working relationships with the Chair, Chief Executive and senior leadership team

Candidate criteria

Essential

- Senior experience leading complex projects and programmes, ideally within the nuclear or defence sector (or another highly regulated industry).
- A focus on on-time, high-quality delivery for the customer.
- Excellent inter-personal skills and demonstrable capability to manage complex stakeholder relationships within a senior leadership context, with the ability to challenge and advise constructively whilst holding executives' leaders to account against delivery targets.

Desirable

- Previous experience as a committee chair in a comparable organisation.
- Experience leading transformation programmes.
- Established networks in relevant nuclear sector.

The appointment will be made by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

Additional information

Time commitment, remuneration, allowances, abatement, pension and redundancy

- Time commitment is 30 days pa
- Remuneration for this role is £33,000 pa and will be treated as employment income and will be subject to tax and National Insurance contributions, both of which will be deducted at source under PAYE before you are paid.
- You can claim reimbursement for reasonable travel and subsistence costs which are properly and necessarily incurred on official business, in line with the travel and subsistence policy and rates for the organisation to which you are applying.
- This is an office holder appointment and does not attract any benefits under any Civil Service Pension Scheme.
- You will not be eligible for redundancy pay as you are not an employee.
- Security clearance - The successful candidate must hold or be able to secure SC level clearance.





How to Apply

To apply complete the following **two** steps by clicking the link in each of the following:

1. **Register your details on the Public Appointments Website** [here](#)
 - From October 2025, all applicants for Public Appointments are required to create an account on the Public Appointments Website and use this portal to submit their equality and outside interest declarations as part of the application process.
2. **Submit your application via the Hays application portal:** [Projects and Programmes link](#)

You will need to provide:

- **Supporting Statement** - Which should address your motivation in applying and the essential criteria in the Person Specification and demonstrate evidence of your suitability for the role against these criteria. *Maximum length: 2 sides of A4.*
- **Curriculum Vitae** - *Maximum length: 3 pages of A4.*

We are committed to ensuring everyone can access our website and application processes. This includes people with sight loss, hearing, mobility and cognitive impairments. Should you require access to these documents in alternative formats, please contact katie.attrill@hays.com.

Please note: your application will not be considered without you completing both the Hays and Public Appointments elements including the equality and political declaration sections.

Kindly note the relevant dates for this campaign

Event	Date
Campaign live	22 nd May 2026
Closing date	15 th June 2026
Initial candidate discussion	23 rd and 24 th June 2026
UKNNL/DESNZ/UKGI interviews	1 st or 2 nd July 2026 (TBC)

The above dates are subject to change.

For an informal discussion do contact one of:

- Andrew Timlin on Andrew.Timlin@hays.com or **07887 777 735**
- Wendi Wang on Wendi.wang@hays.com or **020 7259 874 307**
- For questions about the public appointments process, visit [here](#)

Appointments Process

This competition is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Commissioner for Public Appointments is the independent regulator of Public Appointments (see below).

The appointment will be made by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

Application Process

Once the closing date has passed, the Panel will assess your application to select those demonstrating the best fit with the role by considering the evidence you have provided against the Essential Criteria in the person specification section. Failure to address any or all of these may affect your application.

The Panel will identify a subset of candidates who best match the criteria for an initial interview with Hays to further explore their skills and experience with reference to the criteria in the person specification.

The Panel will then have a further meeting to review interview reports on these candidates alongside CVs and statements of suitability, taking into account all the criteria (Essential and Desirable) in order to select the shortlist. Shortlisted candidates will be advised of the outcome as soon as possible thereafter. References may be taken up for shortlisted candidates in advance of final panel interviews. Furthermore, please note that due diligence is undertaken on all shortlisted candidates.

If you are shortlisted, you will be asked to attend a panel interview in order to have a more in-depth discussion of your previous experience and professional competence in relation to the criteria set out in the vacancy description, key responsibilities and accountabilities and person specification.

Prior to the interview, you may have the opportunity for informal conversations with key personnel in order to improve your understanding of the organisation.

Full details of the assessment process will be made available to shortlisted candidates. We will endeavour to offer as much flexibility as we can, but it may not be possible to offer alternative dates for assessments or interviews. You are therefore asked to note the timetable, exercising flexibility through the recruitment and selection process, in order to meet the dates given. Please note that these dates may be subject to change.

All candidates are also required to complete an online Diversity Monitoring Form which will be found at the end of the application process. This will assist UKNNL in monitoring selection decisions to assess whether equality of opportunity is being achieved. Any information collated from the Diversity Monitoring Forms will not be used as part of the selection process and will be treated as strictly confidential.

If you wish to be considered for the Disability Confident scheme, please mark this in the Diversity Monitoring Form. UKNNL are a Disability Confident employer, which signifies organisations with a positive attitude towards disabled applicants. We will offer



interviews to disabled candidates who meet the minimum requirements for a job or role. It is not necessary to state the nature of your disability. Whether you choose to apply under the Disability Confident scheme or not, you can still ask us to make particular adjustments for you.

Personal data

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/application documentation will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

Contact details

UKNNL Privacy Statement - [Privacy Policies - United Kingdom National Nuclear Laboratory](#)

UKGI Privacy Statement - [Privacy Notice - UKGI](#)

DESNZ Privacy Statement - [DESNZ privacy notices - GOV.UK](#)

Equality, Diversity and inclusion

Our aim: To ensure fair access to our workplace providing a culture where everyone can thrive and feel they belong.

Mission Statement

At UKNNL we are working to ensure we have an inclusive workplace that attracts, retains, and develops diverse talent. Although it is difficult to unpick the structural inequalities still prevalent in our society, we know that as a purpose-led organisation, we are part of the society that we serve and therefore we must be part of the solution.

The scientific sector has a wealth of bright talent at all career stages which we want to attract to help us to continually evolve, establishing UKNNL as a diverse workplace.

Equality & Diversity

In order to achieve our aspirations of equality and diversity, we are working to continuously improve our attraction, recruitment, and promotion processes. We are committed to ensuring these are transparent and fair; that the policies and procedures we operate to are people centric; and that our leaders are empowered to make the right calls in line with our employee-developed [Values and Behaviours](#). As leading scientists, we look to our data for insight. We ask our workforce to share their ED&I data (in an anonymised form) and where we have sufficient information, we are looking to see how fair we really are. We have included our work to date in our recent [Gender Pay Gap Reports](#).



Inclusivity

In order to achieve our aspiration of inclusivity, we believe that we must champion everyone regardless of their particular combination of the protected characteristics or their life circumstances. We know that the respect that underpins the principles of inclusion, such as encouraging a workplace that fosters allyship, challenges and reflects on prejudice are key.

More information can be found on this page: [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - United Kingdom National Nuclear Laboratory](#)

Also, if you have any comments and/or suggestions about improving access to our application processes please don't hesitate to contact katie.attrill@haus.com.

Commissioner for Public Appointments

This competition is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Commissioner for Public Appointments is the independent regulator of public appointments.

The Commissioner's primary role is to provide independent assurance that public appointments are made in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments. The Commissioner also investigates complaints and may conduct an inquiry into the policies and practices followed in relation to appointments processes which he regulates. The Commissioner will not investigate complaints relating to non-selection unless it appears that the appointments process has breached the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Further information on the role of the Commissioner or the appointments process is available at: publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk

Complaints

If you feel your application has not been treated fairly and you wish to make a complaint, you should initially send an email to: katie.attrill@hays.co.uk

If you are not content with our response, please contact the Commissioner for Public Appointments at: publicappointments@csc.gov.uk Further information on complaints procedure can be found on the Commissioner for Public Appointment's website.



Appendix 1

The Seven Principles of Public Life

The Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the Civil Service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The principles also apply to all those in other sectors delivering public services.

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.